

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

**Captain Gonzalo Vargas**  
**Commander, D Co 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 295<sup>th</sup> Inf**



*Front: Capt. Gonzalo Vargas, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Rafael Estades, Spec. Edda Román, and Spec. Michelle Colón. Back row: Sgt. José Vélez, and Sgt. Eliezer Ríos.*

My biggest impression regarding this mission is that it has been and will continue to be a wonderful challenge. Our soldiers come from all walks of life and diverse career fields in Puerto Rico, but we have all been brought together here to achieve one common goal: the defense and security of our country. This has been a new experience for me; never before have I mixed the infantry with different MOS's from support units. I am proud of how professionally these great soldiers have combined to train for and participate in Operation Guardian Mariners. This has not been an easy task, but the opportunity to serve our great nation is an honor for us all.

One of the biggest obstacles is one that has been shared by the rest of the battalion: billeting. Initially we had to sleep on cots in both Hoskins and Lee Physical Fitness Centers. This obstacle didn't necessarily affect us negatively; rather it allowed us to pull together and work as a team. I believe that a unit grows together and becomes more of a family.

I would definitely consider this experience as a positive one. We have all achieved so much in these past few months. Not only have we trained for force protection and security missions. In Delta Company we have put great emphasis on the physical fitness of our soldiers. By doing road marches, four-mile runs, and muscle failure PT, we are all beginning to look and feel great. We will soon surpass the Army's physical fitness standards.

*[Special thanks to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Paul Dahlen]*

## 1-295<sup>th</sup> Inf History Facts

While the 65<sup>th</sup> fought its own war up and down the Korean peninsula and the 296<sup>th</sup> provided the former with fillers, the 295<sup>th</sup> remained in Puerto Rico to act as home guard. The readiness and effectiveness of the Puerto Rican National Guard was demonstrated during a three-day-long Nationalist uprising originated in Jayuya.

Nationalists under orders of separatist leader Pedro Albizu Campos launched a series of attacks around the island in an attempt to deter the ratification of President Truman's bill that authorized Puerto Ricans to adopt their own Constitution. The Nationalists' bold plan to declare a republic included direct attacks on both Puerto Rican and U.S. top government leaders, namely the Governor and the President, respectively. Four Nationalists died during the attack on Santa Catalina while one died at the very Truman's Blair House.

"*Todo por la Patria*" played an important role during the riot control operations.

## THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

CH (CPT) Carlos Correa

### *Accommodating of Religious Practices*

The Army's policy is to approve requests for accommodation of religious practices when those accommodations will not have adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety, or discipline, or otherwise interfere with the performance of the soldier's military duties.

The decision to accommodate rests with the commander. Accommodation of a soldier's religious practices cannot always be guaranteed and must depend upon military necessity (AR 600-20 and DA Pam 600-75).

The planning factors – mission, enemy situation, troops, terrain and weather, time available, and civilian considerations – enter into the accommodation decision.

Did you know that the oldest Army regiment is the Infantry? The Infantry as a regiment traces its beginning to June 14, 1775. The second oldest Army regiment is the Chaplain Corps, when on July 29, 1775, the Second Continental Congress authorized the employment of chaplains for its new and recently organized Army.

# Recent Events

## ***Birthdays . . .***



*On May 21, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 295<sup>th</sup> Inf held a birthday party in honor of Maj. José Rivera Hernáiz, the Bn XO; Capt. Carlos Correa, Bn Chaplain; and Spec. Pedro Díaz, Bn Cdr's Driver. Their respective birthdays are on May 21, May 25, and again, May 25.*

## ***PT Tests . . .***



*Capt. Omar Ruiz's A 1-295<sup>th</sup> "Ninja Turtles" in action. May 20.*



*1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Rafael Estades poses in front of Capt. Gonzalo Vargas's D 1-295<sup>th</sup> "Power Rangers." May 21.*

## ***Teams . . .***



*Lt. Col. Milton Pérez welcomes Staff Sgt. Jimmy Mercado's Team 79 during a ceremony held on May 16.*



*1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Alfredo Zapata's Team 70. May 16.*



*Staff Sgt. Rafael Torres' returning Team 66, which returned on May 19.*

*"Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look on them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even into death."*

*- SUN TZU  
The Art of War*

***"TODO POR LA PATRIA"***

# HATS OFF

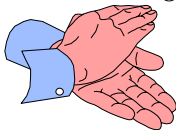
FOR

**THE PT "MEISTERS" GANG:**

**Lt. Col. Milton Pérez (296)**  
**M. Sgt. Harold Arroyo (282)**  
**S. Sgt. Ángel Vargas (290)**  
**Spec. Rodolfo Orsini (296)**  
**Spec. Ángel Morales (299)**  
**Spec. Jorge Ortiz (291)**  
**Spec. Cynthia Rabell (294)**



*For achieving scores above 90 in every event.*



***Congratulations!***

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*Basic Skills Program*

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Fax: (910) 678-8350

E-mail: [gardnec@ftccmail.faytech.cc.nc.us](mailto:gardnec@ftccmail.faytech.cc.nc.us)

**Toi Buchanan**

*ESL Coordinator*

(910) 678-8497

(910) 678-8299

P.O. Box 35236 • Fayetteville, NC 28303  
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## *Did you know that . . .*

- **the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was once a recruiting point of volunteer Airborne Rangers?**

At one time, signs at Fort Bragg named its 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division "America's Guard of Honor." Common knowledge was that if war came, the 82<sup>nd</sup> would be the first to fight, hence why most wanted to serve in it.

With the increasing hostilities in Korea and the fear of World War III, the 82<sup>nd</sup> was the strategic reserve the U.S. held back in case the Soviet Union decided to invade Europe. When announcements that Airborne Ranger units were being formed (and Airborne volunteers needed) to go to Korea, long lines formed.

At the time, onetime first choice Fort Campbell's 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division had been gutted to fill the 187<sup>th</sup> Airborne Regimental Combat Team, the *Rakkasans* [Japanese for "parachutes"] in Korea.

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

*June (1-15)*

## ***Congratulations!***

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) MAJ Vazquez, Daniel - 92 SIB     | (7) PFC Rodriguez, Pedro - A 1-295  |
| (1) PV1 Perez, Luis M. - HHC 1-295   | (8) SGT Santiago, Jose - 92 SIB     |
| (1) SPC Nieves, Edmundo - Trp E      | (8) SPC Colon, Michelle - D 1-295   |
| (1) SPC Ramos, Roberto - 92 SIB      | (9) SGT Vega, Angel L. - Trp E      |
| (2) SGT Centeno, David - 92 SIB      | (9) SPC Diaz, Luis M. - D 1-295     |
| (2) SGT Ortiz, Gilberto - A 1-295    | (9) SPC Merced, Edgardo - HHC 1-295 |
| (2) SSG Jorge, Eduardo - HHC 1-295   | (12) MAJ Magenst, Angel - 92 SIB    |
| (2) SSG Lisojo, Felix - A 1-295      | (12) SGT Roman, Santos - 92 SIB     |
| (3) PV2 Izquierdo, Misael - Trp E    | (12) SPC Lopez, Luis A. - Trp E     |
| (3) SGT Serrano, Ruben - HHC 1-295   | (14) SPC Ramos, Antonio - 92 SIB    |
| (5) SGT Ortiz, Alexis - Trp E        | (14) SSG Rivera, Ricardo - Trp E    |
| (5) SPC Munoz, Francisco - HHC 1-295 | (15) SGT Andino, Jose - 92 SIB      |

## ***Pa' que tú lo sepas....***

*La máxima condecoración estadounidense otorgada en reconocimiento al valor, es la Medalla de Honor. Concebida a principios de 1860 y presentada por vez primera en 1863, al ser presentada "a nombre del Congreso", el uso popular le añadió el vocablo "del Congreso", que, aunque incorrecto, es aceptado.*

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES

### Spanish Catholic

Ret CH (LTC) Kit  
 CH (MAJ) Abreu  
 CH Asst SSG Santos

Sundays @ 1230 hrs  
 Wednesdays @ 1900 hrs

JFK Memorial Chapel  
 Ardennes St.

### Spanish Protestant

CH (CPT) Correa  
 CH Asst SPC Peña

Sundays @ 1230 hrs

Faith Comm Chapel  
 Ardennes St.  
 Bldg D-3733

## EL PENSADOR LIBRE

Contribuye el  
 Sgto. Juan R. Fonseca  
 "El Filósofo de Santurce"

### ***Miedo***

*Quizás un sentimiento, una emoción o un impulso, en muchas personas se puede expresar de distinta manera. Lo importante es cómo lo afrontamos. Tenemos que superarlo, porque nos puede detener en el transcurso de nuestra vida. Muchas veces se nos presenta como un obstáculo en nuestra existencia; nos detiene nuestro desarrollo, y nos limita el deseo de alcanzar nuestra meta.*

*El miedo es el mayor obstáculo del hombre; pero podemos vencerlo. Debemos comenzar con el buen hábito de hacer bien las cosas desde un principio.*

*Cuando tenemos bien definido nuestro objetivo y permitimos que se desarrolle con el buen propósito de algo bien positivo y constructivo, desde ese momento nace en nosotros un deseo muy especial, que llena de ilusión, emoción, alegría y, sobre todo, confianza, para continuar con la gran satisfacción de haber logrado vencer.*

**"TODO POR LA PATRIA"**



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## **THE PUERTO RICO NATIONAL GUARD THROUGH THE AGES**

### **Part II. The New Role of the National Guard**

by Sgt. Luis Asencio Camacho

Records show that as early as the Civil War days Hispanics had served in Regular Army and volunteer units. Although their participation had been one to reckon, discrimination against Hispanics remained widespread in the U.S. military well into the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Soldiers with Spanish surnames or accents were often the objects of ridicule, and were therefore relegated to menial jobs. While Mainland U.S.-bound Latinos lacking English skills were sent to special schools in which they could acquire or improve those language skills before they could be integrated into RA units, Puerto Ricans faced another reality. Barred to basic combat training and regarded as “rum and Coca-Cola soldiers,” they stood at the bottom step of the ladder as far as the Pentagon top brass was concerned. (The 1917 passing of the Jones Act to grant U.S. citizenship to the Puerto Ricans and make them subject to being drafted had apparently made little or no difference.)

From 1940 to 1946, more than 65,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. military, most of them serving overseas. The Puerto Rican National Guard, United States 295<sup>th</sup> Infantry saw service in the Caribbean basin, whereas the 296<sup>th</sup> served along the Pacific. The Regular Army 65<sup>th</sup> served in North Africa and in Central Europe. Other Puerto Rican units include the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, which served mainly in Panama; and the 504<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, the 531<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company, the 18<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Cavalry Squadron, the 51<sup>st</sup> Coast Artillery, and the 245<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company, all of them onetime ancillary units of the 65<sup>th</sup>. In addition, more than 200 Puerto Rican women served in the Women’s Army Corps, where most of them performed as linguists in the fields of cryptology, communications, and interpretation.

Despite their versatility, Puerto Ricans would not have a shot at redemption until the Korean War. After three years of bloody fighting, in which they went from glory to shame and back, the *jibaros* proved the most skeptical minds the valor and value of the Puerto Rican soldier. The reputation they earned during Korea, and the constant advocacy of Brigadier General William Harris, former commander of the 65<sup>th</sup>, won the Puerto Ricans the right to serve abroad and be treated as first-rate soldiers. (This happened after Harris’ subsequent

assignment at Washington DC as the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry had reverted to National Guard status.)

Today, over 21,297 Puerto Ricans serve on active duty in the armed forces. An additional 17,000 are members of the National Guard or Reserve Components. Ten percent of that force participated in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990-1991), and continue to participate in peacekeeping operations around the world.

The regiments of yesteryear might have been reduced to half their strength, and the names and prowess of heroes gone become a faint memory on a page, but the Puerto Rican soldier continues to rank among the best-trained troops in the U.S. Army, honoring the types of the brave Juan de Amezquita and the *milicianos*. From the steamy Panamanian jungles to the snowcapped Alpine mountains, from the razor-sharped Korean hills to the scorching Kuwaiti deserts, *puertorros* have played a decisive role in U.S. military operations.

The prolific Luis Esteves Völkers couldn’t have said it better when he insisted upon the organization of our National Guard:

“I was convinced that the Puerto Ricans could be as good soldiers as the best from any other country in the world.”

### **Further Readings:**

Harris, William W. *Puerto Rico’s Fighting 65<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry: From San Juan to Chorwan*. Presidio Press: Novato, California. 1980.

Hernández y Torres, Miguel J. *Puerto Rican Ancestors in Spanish and American Military Records* (article featured in *La Genealogía de Puerto Rico*). Online: Internet. 4 pp. (2002).

Schmal, John P. “Hispanic Contributions to America’s Defense,” *The Puerto Rico Herald*, November 11, 1999.

Soto, Baltazar. “The 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Jackson Heights, Korea Part 1: Company G” (article featured in the Third Infantry Division Society’s newsletter *The Watch on the Rhine*), October 2001.

Villahermosa, Gilberto. “*Honor and Fidelity*” *The 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Korea 1950-1954* (Official Army Report on the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the Korean War), U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington DC (2000).

\_\_\_\_\_. “America’s Hispanics in America’s War,” *Army Magazine*, September 2002.

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*The author is an amateur military historian currently working on the final editing of a novel based on the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment’s exploits in Korea.*

# Puerto Rico's War Heroes

*"The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry give daily proof on the battlefields of Korea of their courage, determination and resolute will to victory, their invincible loyalty to the United States and their fervent devotion to those immutable principles of human relations which the Americans of the Continent and Puerto Rico have in common. They are writing a brilliant record of accomplishment and I am indeed proud to have them under my command. I wish that we could count on many more like them."*

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur  
Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command  
in letter to Eugene Wright, of the *Puerto Rico News*  
February 12, 1951

Although thousands of Puerto Ricans have served courageously in the U.S. armed forces since World War I, their presence and sacrifices have gone relatively unnoticed in America. This series will shed light on the contributions, accomplishments and struggles of those remarkable men and women.



**Luis Raúl Esteves Völkers (1893-1958)**  
*The first Puerto Rican West Pointer*

Major General Esteves Völkers was the first Puerto Rican graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point (Class of 1915). More than 50 members of his class reached the general grade, including one, Dwight D. Eisenhower, who also made President of the United States. Major General Esteves Völkers is responsible for organizing the Puerto Rico National Guard.

**Horacio Rivero, Jr. (1910-2000)**  
*The first Puerto Rican four-star admiral*

Admiral Rivero, the Honorary Chairman of the Veterans' Committee, continues to inspire and motivate Puerto Ricans from all walks of life. Born in Ponce, Admiral Rivero attended the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, and served in World War II. In 1964, he became the first Puerto Rican – indeed the first Hispanic American – to be elevated to the rank of four-star admiral. He went on to become Vice Chief of Naval Operations and, after retiring in 1972, U.S. Ambassador to Spain.



**65<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry Regiment (The "Borinqueneers")**  
*The first and only all-Puerto Rican unit in the U.S. Army*

Of all those who served with honor and distinction in Korea, few displayed the courage, loyalty and determination of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of Puerto Rico. From its inception in 1899 until 1950, the regiment had been relegated to minor roles. In Korea, the men of the 65<sup>th</sup> had their first chance to prove themselves to the skeptics of the U.S. military establishment, and they made the most of the opportunity. Over the course of the war, "Puerto Rico's Own," the "Borinqueneers" participated in eight major campaigns, and played a decisive role in several crucial battles. Because of its courageous efforts, the 65<sup>th</sup> received a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations.

On the previous edition of "Puerto Rico's War Heroes" we stated that 139 Hispanics have received the Medal of Honor, when we should have said 39. Our apologies for this misinformation.

***"TODO POR LA PATRIA"***